

Constantine and the Donatists 17*

hope of restoring unity, offered to send letters of communion to all who had been consecrated by Majorinus, proposing that where there were two rival bishops, the senior in time of consecration should be confirmed in the appointment, while another see should be found for the other. But the Donatists would listen to no compromise. They appealed again to the Emperor, who, with a very pardonable outburst of wrath, denounced the rabid and implacable hatreds of these turbulent Africans.

Knowing that the quarrel would be resumed in full blast if Caecilianus and Donatus returned to Africa, Constantine detained them both in Italy*. Two Italian bishops, Eunomius and Olympius, were* meanwhile sent to Carthage to act as peacemakers and explain to the African congregations which was the true Catholic Church. It was none other, they said, than the Church which was diffused throughout the whole world, and they insisted that the judgment of the nineteen bishops was one from which there could be no appeal. The Donatists, however, retorted that if the verdict of nineteen bishops was sacred, a verdict of seventy must be even more so. They resisted the overtures of their visitors, and thus, when Donatus and Caecilianus in turn reappeared on the scene, the fires of partisanship did not lack for fuel. It was no longer possible for the Donatists to press for a rehearing on the ground of the personal character of Caecilianus. They had had their chance in Rome to impugn the Primate's character, and had failed. They now shifted their ground and based their claim upon the fact that